

25th March 1985.



© Angeline Rockas and Mark Knox In *Enemies*.

## A timeless Maxim

### WHAT'S ON

Gorki is a difficult playwright to tackle, but in her production of *ENEMIES*, dated 1906, Ann Pennington has come up with a production that touches subtle moods and depths. Since this play with its large cast and three spacious sets is being done in the upper room of a pub (the Sir Richard Steele on Haverstock Hill, 586 1732) this is no mean feat. She gets from her actors a range of generally good performances, but this is a play that is very much a company vehicle and it would have been better if the cast could have worked at it for a number of previews before its opening. Still, you have the sense that it will work better and better during its four week season. (until April 21) as the actors find the weights and depths of this prodigious piece.

The period is the uneasy time before the main revolution of 1917, with the wealthy classes increasingly distanced from the disaffected workers. It ends with an outburst of polemic (Gorki was a committed activist) and shows in dramatic light the disintegration of order. Actors I particularly liked, in a clean and clipped translation, were Nick Ellsworth as a middle-class Chekhovian holdover; David Milton Jones as a powerfully contained revolutionary; Lynn Rose as a passionate girl; Stewart Permutt in a well observed portrayal of a fussy clerk; Angeline Rockas as an actress with a strange little stuck-on smile. It's visually very good (atmospherically designed by Paul Brown) and when the actors really get into their roles, and react more passionately, this may well be the fringe production to see. It had my companion riveted, and she had never seen anything of Gorki's before.

M.L.

'Yakov(Nick Ellsworth) and Yakov's actress wife(Angelique Rockas):these two occupy a central position , sensitively delineating both the aspirations and the fate of the more humane elements of the middleclass'

## Theatre Review

### ENEMIES

The Sir Richard Steele Theatre

ONE remarkable thing about this production of Gorki's fiery drama is that it demonstrates most effectively that this is an even better and much more tautly-written play than I had supposed.

Every line tells, and the talented cast never seems to miss a nuance.

Gorki here presents, with a subtlety and precision equal to Chekhov's, a wide range of pre-revolutionary Russian figures: as with Chekhov, we watch events largely through their impact on middleclass lives.

But the point of this play is that Gorki's vision extends beyond this most various and entertaining group to the rising revolutionary forces that will supersede it. He presents the tragic events of 1905 in the light of a fierce, prophetic optimism.

The workingclass are a shadowy but increasingly powerful presence. The spotlight falls on the "liberal" capitalist, Zakhar (Harold Saks), and on his neice Nadya (Lynn Rose) who, with the honest idealism of youth exposes the brutality of capitalist ethics whether hard-line or "wet" — and on Zakhar's hard-drinking brother, Yakov (Nick Ellsworth) and Yakov's actress wife (Angelique Rockas): these two occupy a central position, sensitively delineating both the aspirations and the fate of the more humane elements in the middleclass.

The conscious "enemies" are Zakhar's partner, Mikhail (Stephen Brigden), the latter's termagant wife, Kleopatra (Madalena Nedeva) and his brother, the Public Prosecutor (Anthony Sergeant) — against whom are ranged the dedicated

revolutionary, Sintsov (Mark Knox), the sly, philosophical old worker, Levshin (Stephen Wale) and the proud young activist, Grekov (David Milton Jones).

Other workers are played by Tim Harrison, Ray Sharples and Derek Broome. Marilyn Finlay is Zakhar's wife, Paulina — a most thoughtful performance. Norman Caro and Christopher Banks brilliantly present the old soldier, Kon, and the mad-hatter General. Stewart Permutt is a splendidly repulsive toady.

And when I have named Brigid Mackay who, in the part of the old servant, Agrafena, manages to be a dead spit of the grandmother in the film, "The Childhood of Gorki", I shall have mentioned every member of the huge but never unwieldy cast (so sensitively and unobtrusively are they deployed by their director, Ann Pennington), each one of whom deserves more than a mere line or two of critical praise.

A fine production of a great play — don't miss it! Paul Lewenstein

"Shortage of space alone prevents me from listing all the merits of Ann Pennington's production or giving proper credit to the large and splendid cast.

Just go and see it; this is a great revolutionary play by a great revolutionary writer, performed with elegance, passion and deep commitment"

26th March 1985, page 8.

MORNING STAR  
TOM VAUGHN

IN TRUE Russian style, Maxim Gorky presents an industrial dispute not only in terms of a confrontation between workers and bosses, but through the cross-currents it generates among the close-knit membership of the factory owner's family and household; the two Bardin brothers, their wives and their niece Nadia.

The time is 1905, the year of the "failed" Russian revolution.

Zakhar, the elder, is a liberal who provides Sunday classes and discussion circles for his workers.

But when his martinet manager, Mikhail Skrobotov, is killed in a brawl while trying to shut down the factory, Zakhar's liberalism (like that of some members of the National Coal Board) beats a very hasty retreat.

It is young Nadia who learns the truth of the class struggle, as the army and the secret police turn the family home into a police station and try to frame the ringleaders and Socialists among the factory workers.

When her uncles and aunts, whom she once respected, make no attempt at resistance or protest, she rounds on them.

"Why do you call yourselves my elders?" she cries. "You're just old, unnecessary people."

But it is her aunt Pauline who gives Gorky his title and presages another factory owner's wife and future British Prime Minister.

"I tell you, the workers are enemies. They are all our enemies," she says.

Shortage of space alone prevents me from listing all the merits of Ann Pennington's production or giving proper credit to the large and splendid cast.

Just go and see it; this is a great revolutionary play by a great revolutionary writer, performed with elegance, passion and deep commitment.

# Κολακευτικά σχόλια για την Αγγελική Ρόκας

Σε σχετικό δημοσίευμα μας για τις παραστάσεις του έργου «Οι Εχθροί» του Μαξίμ Γκόρκυ, στις οποίες πρωταγωνιστούσε η ελληνικής καταγωγής Νοτιαφρικανή ηθοποιός Αγγελική Ρόκας, είχαμε αναφέρει ότι το έργο αυτό θα παιζόταν μέχρι την 20ην Απριλίου αλλά λόγω της επιτυχίας του οι παραστάσεις παρατάθηκαν για άλλη μια εβδομάδα, μέχρι τις 27 του ίδιου μήνα.

Ηδη, με την επιτυχία του θεατρικού αυτού έργου, όπως το παρουσίασε ο θίασος της δ. Ρόκας Internationalist Theatre στο θέατρο Sir Richard Steele σε σκηνοθεσία της Ann Pennington, ασχολήθηκαν τα περιοδικά Time Out, What's On, City Limits τα οποία στις καλλιτεχνικές τους στήλες εκφράζουν διάφορα κολακευτικά σχόλια για δλους δύσους εργάσθηκαν για το ανάβασμά του.

- Επίσης πολύ κολακευτικά σχόλια δημοσίευσε και η απογευματινή εφημερίδα του Λονδίνου The Standard της 2ας Απριλίου που περιέχοντο σε επιστολή αναγνώστη της υπό τον τίτλο «Οιμεγάλοι του Αύριον;» (Tommorrow's greats?)

Louis VRAKAS

## Enemies

A NEW production of Maxim Gorky's *Enemies* opened at The Sir Richard Steele Theatre last Monday, produced in association with the Internationalist Theatre, whose artistic director is the talented and accomplished Greek Cypriot actress Angélique Rockas.

The performance, while lacking a certain polish, had so much vitality and atmosphere that its shortcomings succeeded only to heighten the confusion which reigns in this classic story of class war in pre-revolutionary Russia.

There were some excellent and passionate performances by the gravel-voiced Steven Wale playing the worker Levshun and Lyn Rose who played young Nadya, who sees behind the hypocrisy of her elders but cannot make herself heard because of her youth.

Angélique Rockas as the world-weary actress, Tatiana, and only

character who seems fully to understand the inevitable tragedy towards which the characters are heading gave a very fine performance.

Her speech to her only confidant, Yakov Barden, about her passionate love for the stage is so credible it can only be said to come from the heart.

The rather limited stage space serves well to create a suitably claustrophobic atmosphere, as tension mounts between the workers and factory owners. Although at times there seemed to be far too many players on stage, this enhances the idea of a middle-class household suddenly finding itself in the midst of anarchy and disorder.

Though the message is an old one, the performances are fresh and vital and not to be missed □

EL

BBC Russian Service.

БЕСЫ ДОСТОЕВСКОГО И ВРАГИ ГОРЬКОГО

Gorky's 'ENEMIES'

ЧАРГ: После французской и итальянской премьер спектакля Юрия Любимова "Бесы" по Достоевскому, спектакль вернулся на сцену театра "Алмейда" с лондонской премьерой. Рассказывает Энтони Тема. "Бесов" Достоевского была неожиданно подхвачена еще одной лондонской постановкой: "Врагами" Максима Горького на сцене одного из театров-лабораторий на Севере Лондона. Рассказывает Энтоний Синник:

ЗИННИК: Лондонская премьера любимовского спектакля вызвала самые противоречивые отзывы в прессе: от чисто неограниченного восхищения режиссерскими метафорами спектакля в рецензии Хайкла Ковена из страничек "Сайнентиал Таймс", до разгромной заметки Штерна Дарона Гитера из "Санди Таймс", который заключил свой анализ любимовского спектакля следующими словами:

ГОЛОС 1: Роман Достоевского - это акт обличения религиозной веры; спектакль Любимова - это акт терроризма в культуре.

ЗИННИК: Неудивительно, что сам Юрий Любимов был не столько польщен похвалой критиков, сколько обескуражен подобным безапелационным приговором его работе над "Бесами". Может быть поэтому на встрече Юрия Любимова со зрителями театра "Алмейда", где была поставлена любимовская инсценировка "Бесов", столько времени было посвящено традициям любимовской режиссуры. Отвечая на обвинение в "культурном терроризме" Любимов рассказал, что стены его кабинета в московском театре на Таганке были испещрены подписьми именитых гостей, причем каждый последующий именитый гость из зарубежной социалистической республики старался замазать подписи его бывших вождей на той же стене. Это и есть "терроризм культурный терроризм", сказал Любимов. Последовал вопрос о его великих предшественниках, от Станиславского и Брехта до Бахтанидзе и Мейерхольда, портреты которых, опять же, висели

Вахтангова

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